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DENR

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PRESS RELEASES

PEZA, DENR to sign MOU on the use of viable lands to become agro-industrial, agro-forestry, mineral processing, and eco- tourism economic zones

Published on: May 30, 2022

By PEZA

PASAY CITY -- Consistent with proactively spreading ecozone development in the countryside pursuant to Administrative Order (AO) No. 18, Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) Director General Charito B. Plaza will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) OIC-Secretary Jim O. Sampulna on 31 May 2022, 09:00 AM at PEZA Head Office in DoubleDragon, Pasay City.

The MOU expressed their cooperation towards identifying viable public lands under the department's jurisdiction that can be proposed for Presidential Proclamation as an ecozone, with the CARAGA region as the pilot area.

PEZA Chief Plaza mentioned, "As the country transition to the Presidency of President-elect Bongbong Marcos Jr., we in PEZA are positive about the economic outlook under the new President and we continue with our mandate on attracting investments and generating exports and jobs. More so, we are actively embarking on new frontiers of creating viable, smart, and environment-friendly ecozones in as many provinces as possible based on the land potentials by industries and responsible utilization of natural resources as mandated under AO No. 18."

"This MOU signing will serve as an initial and broad framework of understanding between PEZA with the DENR towards the goal of identifying public lands nationwide that can be harnessed in a sustainable and environmentally-compliant manner, to spread ecozones because they are drivers of economic growth outside the National Capital Region (NCR)," she added.

With the upcoming signing, PEZA has invited Honorable Senator and Chairman of the Senate Committee on Economic Affairs Maria Imelda Josefa Remedios "Imee" R. Marcos to grace the ceremony as the Special Guest of Honor and Keynote Speaker.

The Director General said, "We have invited Senator Imee Marcos in this joint project of PEZA and DENR in utilizing public lands nationwide into agroforestry, agro-industrial, eco-tourism, and mineral processing economic zones to restore back the major industries in an environment-



friendly manner since PEZA is promoting an environment-friendly industrialization. These are anchored to PEZA's vision to establish a self-reliant, self-sustaining, and resource-generating, production and export-driven economy to attain total development in the country."

Senator Imee Marcos' father and the late president Ferdinand Marcos Sr. pioneered the establishment of economic zones in the Philippines under Presidential Decree No. 66 in 1972 that created the Export Processing Zone Authority (EPZA), the predecessor of the current PEZA.

PEZA-DENR MOU Signing

Under the MOU, the DENR agrees to provide an inventory of public lands and islands under its jurisdiction to PEZA in order to explore feasible development of sustainable mineral and agro-forestry processing economic zones, oil depots, refinery ecozones, eco-tourism, agro-industrial special economic zones.

According to the PEZA Director General, "This comes with a great advantage as it will help minimize the impact of the dramatic increase in oil price and at the same time guard against supply chain disruption and completing the supply chain."

The DENR will also provide technical assistance to PEZA in the formulation of proposals which shall include the adoption of a Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (PEIS) approach for the identified Special Economic Zones.

Further, PEZA and DENR may constitute a Technical Working Group (TWG) that will study, formulate, and recommend policies that shall be adopted and observed by both agencies in implementing the MOU.

PEZA Chief said, "May God bless us in our journey under the Marcos presidency as we continue to attract investments in the country and create economic zones that will be the location of global industries to do business in the Philippines."

The economic zones concept of the late President Ferdinand Marcos Sr. under the then Export Processing Authority (EPZA) was inherited by PEZA in 1995. Director General Plaza was among the co-authors of the PEZA Law passed in the said year and has revolutionized the Authority by creating different types of ecozones to protect the environment, responsibly utilize the land and natural resources and locate the equivalent export and domestic market industries, complete the supply chain, and grow and develop MSMEs, as well as harness the skills and generate jobs for farmers and Filipinos.

"All of these can contribute to making the Philippines a self-reliant, self-sustaining and a resource generating, minimize import-dependence and enhance the production and manufacturing capability, and build a digitalized and export-driven economy," PEZA Chief Plaza shared.

This MOU signing on May 31st also adheres to DENR's mandate of conserving the environment, and properly managing or developing the country's natural resources. (PEZA)

Source: <https://pia.gov.ph/press-releases/2022/05/30/peza-denr-to-sign-mou-on-the-use-of-viable-lands-to-become-agro-industrial-agro-forestry-mineral-processing-and-eco-tourism-economic-zones>



National, News

DENR: Engineered sanitary landfill in Marawi City to be completed end of June 2022

Published May 30, 2022, 6:31 PM
by Aaron Recuenco



photo: DENR

By the end of June this year, the construction of the engineered sanitary landfill in Marawi City will be done, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said on Monday, May 30.

DENR Sec. Jim O. Sampilna said the landfill will benefit the residents of Marawi City and other parts of Lanao del Sur.

He said the open dumpsite that used to accommodate tons of garbage will be rehabilitated and eventually be converted into good use.

Sampilna said the DENR also took part in facilitating the rebuilding of damaged properties while ensuring the authenticity of claims.

Under the program "Katagombalay," the DENR has successfully validated 3,914 property claims so far, allowing owners to undertake reconstruction.



DENR sinisi mga barangay sa koleksiyon ng basura

By Abante Tonite — Last updated May 30, 2022

ENTERTAINMENT



Nananatiling malaking problema pa rin ang paghihiwalay ng basura dahil sa maling pangangasiwa ng waste segregation sa mga lokal na pamahalaan, ayon sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Sabi ni acting DENR Secretary Jim Sampulna, bagama't pasado na ang Republic Act No. 9003 o Ecological Solid Waste Management of 2000 kung saan binigyan ng mandato sa basura sa barangay level, ilang local government unit ang hindi pa rin istrikotong nagpapatupad nito.



TOP STORIES

DENR imposes moratorium on new applications for seabed quarry permits

May 31, 2022 | 12:32 am



PHILIPPINE STAR/ EDD GUMBAN

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has imposed a moratorium on the acceptance of new applications for special exploration permits or government seabed quarry permits.

The DENR issued Administrative Order (AO) 171-2022 on May 2 after President Rodrigo R. Duterte's directive to stop accepting applications for reclamation activities.

"This will house the Environmental Management Bureau's statistics which will be presented visually for better appreciation and understanding of everyone, especially our clients and stakeholders," he said.

Masuda noted that with the learning brought by the pandemic, the DENR has been ramping up efforts to strengthen online systems, with a comprehensive database and monitoring compliance included on the top advancement measures.

"The President directed the DENR and the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) to put on hold the acceptance of all new applications for reclamation projects in the country; and ensure that the pending applications strictly comply with all legal requirements," the order read.

Under the order, there will be a moratorium on the acceptance of all new applications for special exploration permit/government seabed quarry permits until another presidential directive is issued.

A copy of AO 171-2022 was published in a newspaper on Monday. It will take effect after 15 days.



Seabed quarrying refers to the process of extracting, removing and disposing of quarry resources found in offshore areas. It is usually considered for massive land reclamation projects.

The PRA approves bids and awards for contracts for government reclamation projects.

The DENR issues the final permit for any company planning to undertake seabed quarrying and mining.

In 2021, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) received six government seabed quarry permit (GSQP) applications, according to MGB Director Wilfredo G. Moncano.

“We have a total of 10 officially accepted GSQP applications. We are waiting for their compliance with the Area Status and Clearance before we proceed to the next stage of evaluation. If they failed to comply with the Area Status and Clearance within the prescribed period, we will be denying their applications,” he said in a text message.

Mr. Moncano said that there were another four GSQP applications filed before the moratorium that were still not officially accepted.

Meanwhile, Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael L. Ricafort said that the DENR’s order was a step towards ensuring that the local mining and quarrying industry remain environmentally sustainable.

“There is a need to align the global best practices on mining activities, in terms of sustainability and minimize adverse impact on the environment. Increased international compliance with [environmental] standards by both international and local regulators in recent years would place more stringent environment standards, by carefully weighing the environmental damage or impact of those activities over the long-term compared to economic gains derived,” he said in a text message.

“This is also consistent with the increased need to sustain the country’s marine resources amid the country’s importation of fish in recent months,” he added.


In December 2021, the government lifted the four-year ban on open-pit mining.

In April, President Rodrigo R. Duterte had also lifted the nine-year moratorium on granting mining permits. — Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson



PEF eyes transfer of PH eagles to another sanctuary

By Christine Cudis

 May 30, 2022, 6:37 pm



PH EAGLE WEEK. The Philippine Eagle Foundation eyes to move the eagles in its sanctuary to a more secure location amid threats of avian flu. PEF official Andi Baldonado on Monday (May 30, 2022) says the move would be costly but hopes they can gain sponsors during the Philippine Eagle Week next month. (Screengrab)

DAVAO CITY – The Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) is contemplating on moving its endangered eagles from its sanctuary to a more secure location amid fears of avian influenza (AI) or bird flu.

"All it takes is a single case of this fatal virus in the Philippine Eagle Center (PEC) and the only captive breeding stock of the species in the world will be wiped out," PEF Development Manager Andi Baldonado said during a press briefing here Monday.

Baldonado cited the AI outbreak in the neighboring town of Magsaysay, Davao del Sur, last month, which is close to the PEC facility in Malagos district.

"It is a mere 90 kilometers southwest of the PEC. It brings the threat right at our doorstep and puts at risk all 34 eagles in the PEC of being decimated," she said.

"That is losing 5 percent of the total estimated global population of this already critically endangered bird," she added.

However, Baldonado admitted that moving the eagles to a more secure and viable location for breeding would be costly.

"This plan is costly and requires participation from both government and private sectors to implement. This Philippine Eagle Week (PEW), we aim to generate support for this endeavor," she said.

This June 4 to 13, the PEF, along with SM Lanang Premier, Boysen Paints Philippines, and San Roque Power Corporation will celebrate "#AgiLaya: Lasting Freedom for the Philippine Eagle."

The event coincides with the PEF's 35th anniversary.



Highlights of the event include an exhibit from June 5 to 12 featuring Philippine eagle conservation milestones at SM Lanang Premier Atrium.

From the taxidermy specimen of the late Pag-asa to gears for forest patrolling, the exhibit aims to give a glimpse of the significant strides in eagle conservation. (PNA)



Foundation needs P56 million to transfer Eagle Center to Eden, Toril



KRIZZY S. DAUGDAUG
May 30, 2022

- A A +

THE Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) will need P56 million to transfer the Eagle Center to Barangay Eden in Toril from Malagos, said Andi Baldonado, PEF development manager.

“The long term plan is really to move already, kasi hindi na po conducive yong Malagos for breeding and keeping the bird safe para sa mga ganitong threat, avian flu, it's becoming more frequent na, para mas ma-seclude natin ‘yong population and avoid the risk of contamination, so we need to isolate them.” Baldonado said.

(Moving is part of our long term plan because Malagos is no longer conducive for breeding and keeping the birds safe from avian flu. We need to isolate them so that we can protect their population and avoid the risk of contamination.)

PEF said in a statement that it only takes a single case of avian flu in the Philippine Eagle Center (PEC) to wipe out the captive breeding stock.

Earlier, a bird flu outbreak was reported in Magsaysay, Davao del Sur, which is around 90 kilometers southwest of the PEC, posing a risk to the 34 eagles in the center.

Aside from the outbreak, a python attacked a juvenile Philippine eagle and died inside its snake-proofed and safe enclosure.

According to Baldonado, the target location is part of the protected area of Mount Apo.



Compared to 8.4 hectares in Malagos, the eyed location in Eden is around 50 hectares and is allotted for conservation.

“That’s very small (Malagos area), it’s not enough even for a buffer area, in fact if you look at Malagos right now, yong enclosure namin right now, next to it is farm lot, wala tayong buffer, talagang yong mga agila natin exposed lang to form activities and other residential activities around the area.” Baldonado said.

However, she said developing the new location comes with a big price tag.

“This have to take more time, kasi ang laki ng budget na kailangan namin to develop the facility, based on our framework plan, we need at least P56 million to develop enclosures, hospital for the eagles for the area, hindi accessible itong area na ito kaya it all causes a lot of expenses when it comes to construction,” Baldonado said.

(We need at least P56 million based on our framework to develop enclosures, hospital for the eagles because the location is not accessible, which is why developing it can be expensive.)

Baldonado said they hope to get support from the government for the allocation of the budget requirement and to engage with their corporate partners, donors and fundraising activities.

“We’re still working on aligning our plans with the city’s plan as well with the development of this area,” Baldonado said.

PEF said that since the pandemic in 2020, they have recorded 12 eagle rescue cases from Mindanao.

Meanwhile, PEF will celebrate its 35th year and presents the Philippine Eagle Week (PEW) in SM Lanang Premier from June 4 to 13, 2022 with the theme “#AgiLaya: Lasting Freedom for the Philippine Eagle.”

The event will highlight an exhibit from June 5 to 12, 2022, featuring Philippine Eagle conservation milestones.



PHL sees investment opportunities as world turns greener

MAY 30, 2022, 3:13 PM



Bloomberg
Writer

THE Philippines is counting on the world's shift to green technology and the pandemic-induced demand for data centers to boost investments in its mining industry, said Trade Undersecretary Perry Rodolfo.

The end of a ban on new mining permits also positions the sector to attract funds for a shift toward processing instead of simply exporting ores, Rodolfo, who also heads the Board of Investments (BoI), said. The BoI separately aims to win about P1 trillion (\$20 billion) in investment commitments from home and abroad this year, up by 50 percent from 2021.

"The Philippines is blessed when it comes to very critical minerals that are needed by everyone as we shift towards a more digitalized and greener world," Rodolfo said commenting on the demand for nickel, copper and cobalt. "The next key thing is to really make sure that they are processed here and we add value prior to exporting them."

The Southeast Asian nation is the world's second-biggest producer of nickel. The aim is to locally process ore into "precursors" for a wide array of products, including batteries used to power data centers and electric vehicles.

The plan fits well with the government's move to promote investments in hyperscaler data centers that use big batteries. Economic managers recently ordered that the 40% foreign equity restrictions on solar, wind and tidal renewable energy projects be removed.

Companies planning to put up data centers "have to use renewable energy. Otherwise, they will just be competing with other sectors in the Philippines for power," Rodolfo said.

President Rodrigo R. Duterte, whose six-year term ends on June 30, last week signed the 2022 strategic investment priority plan which lists activities like environment and climate-change related projects eligible for tax incentives.

Rodolfo is optimistic that investors will continue coming in when the new administration of President-elect Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. takes power.

"Each administration builds on the reform efforts of the past administration," he said.

Source: <https://opinyon.net/national/phl-sees-investment-opportunities-as-world-turns-greener?fbclid=IwAR2afcXdxYjCSUV0Q7f8LvwsH4Vn38NCRusSc9ty5OXaQIOZVAXGI9JeLX4>



Manila Water reveals ESG goals

Catherine Talavera - The Philippine Star ⓘ

May 31, 2022 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Razon-led Manila Water Co. Inc. has released its medium term sustainability targets that outlines its progress and plans on embedding Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) into their business strategies.

In a statement yesterday, Manila Water unveiled the first series of its medium-term sustainability goals that it plans to achieve by 2025.

One of these goals is to reduce and avoid scopes one and two carbon emissions by 60 percent through renewable energy and wastewater treatment.

According to the Greenhouse Gas Protocol Corporate Standards, scope one emissions refer to direct emissions from owned and controlled sources, while scope two are indirect emissions from the generation of purchased energy.

Manila Water also plans to build infrastructures to satisfy service commitments and improvements by 2025.

Also part of its medium-term targets is to ensure water access and security by allocating at least 15 percent supply buffer from expansion and additional raw water sources.

Manila Water said the ESG goals highlight its belief that long-term viability is dependent on management of environmental impacts and commitment to improve social outcomes in the communities it serves.

“We have re-imagined the company with a new purpose, vision and mission. We are drawing on our heritage as an industry pioneer in sustainability practices and reporting to further focus on and embed ESG into our business strategies,” said Manila Water president and CEO Jocot de Dios.

“This very same foundation will continue to support us as we aim for greater and better things, and as we pursue our vision to become a global leader in providing quality water and environmental services, supportive of sustainable development,” he said.

Manila Water has already made headway with its medium-term targets, specifically on using green or renewable energy (RE).

Last year, the company utilized 13.8 million kilowatt hours (kwh) of RE using onsite solar panels and purchasing RE from Open Access.

In addition to forging progress towards its environmental goal, the company formed its ESG committee at the board level earlier this year.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/business/2022/05/31/2184836/manila-water-reveals-esg-goals>



First Philippine Holdings to spend P51-B capex, bulk going to clean energy projects

ABS-CBN News

Posted at May 30 2022 09:25 PM

MANILA - First Philippine Holdings Corp on Monday said it is eyeing P51 billion in capital expenditures this year, bulk of which will go to its power units for the conglomerate's clean energy push.

FPH President and COO Francis Giles Puno said 56 percent of the budget, or about P29 billion will go to the company's power generation group. The amount will fund Energy Development Corp's drilling and growth initiatives, and First Gen's LNG and Aya projects.

About P18 billion or 35 percent of the capex will go to FPH's property sector, with the balance of P4 billion allocated to the conglomerate's construction, manufacturing and new businesses in healthcare and education.

Puno said FPH's transition to a decarbonized future will be anchored in the next few years by its LNG initiatives.

"When complete, our LNG terminal in Batangas City will allow us to import natural gas from around the world, thus providing consumers with clean, reliable energy that will also displace power produced by dirty coal, even after our indigenous supply in Malampaya is exhausted," Puno said.

The Lopez-led conglomerate said power demand in Luzon continues to grow as the economy reopens and quarantine restrictions are gradually relaxed.

Citing data from the Department of Energy, FPH said Luzon demand is expected to grow by 5.46 percent annually from 2022-2023, and needs additional capacity to address thin reserves.

The company noted the numerous red and yellow alerts issued by the DOE last year and this year over thin power reserves.

"We expect this to persist until new power plants come online," Puno said.

He said First Gen is also planning to significantly expand its wind and solar portfolio over the coming years.

"The demand for wind and solar will not just come from grid operators serving electricity, households looking to cut their carbon emissions, and contestable customers operating commercial and industrial establishments."

But Puno expects LNG to "help keep the lights on when these sources are not available."



“We see LNG as the bridge fuel that will make wind and solar power more reliable, increasing demand and hastening widespread adoption of these platforms onto our power systems.”

FPH aims to be at the forefront of the transition to a net zero carbon economy by 2050.

Puno said that it cannot be denied that the planet’s climate is changing faster and more dangerously than previously thought.

“This is why we believe sustainability is no longer enough in a world that’s badly in need of healing and renewal. We specifically chose to use the word Regenerative in our recrafted mission, with all the responsibility that it carries,” Puno said.

“Being regenerative, however, isn’t just about renewing the environment. Above all else, it’s about healing the wounds inflicted on our communities and societies from decades of flawed economic thinking and the resulting policies that have widened inequalities making the dream of prosperity for billions of people even more out of reach.”

FPH and ABS-CBN are part of the Lopez Group of companies.

Source: https://news.abs-cbn.com/business/05/30/22/first-philippine-holdings-targets-clean-power-with-p51-b-capex?fbclid=IwAR0GeUceRcNmfQ_iP-K9xIxUZCQkKVwvd6VUB-LVmrDIBv8uOjyKivNXqx4%27



BAN Toxics calls on the Philippine government to ratify total ban on imported wastes

Monday, May 30, 2022 Journal Online



BAN Toxics at the Philippine Senate in Pasay City during a protest rally for the repatriation of the Canada Waste on May 24, 2019.

In line with the Philippines' historic repatriation of the Canadian Waste, environmental watchdog group BAN Toxics urges the Philippine government to expedite its ratification of the Basel Ban or risk becoming the toxic waste dump of the world.

In January 2014, a shipment of garbage from Canada was discovered at the Manila International Container Port, making it the most prominent incident of foreign waste dumping in the Philippines. Since then, environmental organizations have advocated for the return of the garbage.

The incident prompted widespread condemnation of waste disposal from developed nations.

A Philippine court ruled in 2016 that the shipped garbage shall be returned. On May 30, 2019, five years after their discovery in Philippine ports, the Canadian garbage was finally returned to Vancouver. On the same day, BAN Toxics, along with environmental NGO groups, Ecowaste Coalition, Greenpeace Philippines, and Break Free from Plastic, reaffirmed the call to ratify the Basel Ban Amendment, which prohibits the import of all waste for any reason.

In addition to the Canadian waste issue, authorities also uncovered illegally imported hazardous wastes to the Philippines from South Korea, Hong Kong, and Australia in recent years.



The Basel Ban Amendment, adopted by the Basel Convention parties in 1995, prohibits the export of hazardous wastes from member states of the European Union, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), and Liechtenstein to poorer countries, whether for recycling or not.

BAN Toxics

For developing countries like the Philippines that have still not ratified the Ban Amendment, they are inadvertently sending a message that says, “We wish to retain the option of importing hazardous wastes from developed countries, even when the Basel Convention, which we are Party to, has been changed to forbid this type of trade.”

“While this is a momentous moment for the Filipino people, still, the country faces a number of issues related to hazardous waste shipments. As long as there’s nothing that protects the developing countries from becoming a dumping ground for unwanted toxic waste and garbage, we remain vigilant, and will continue to call out the government for immediate actions,” says Reynaldo San Juan Jr., executive director of BAN Toxics.

“We appeal to the Philippine government to ratify the Basel Ban Amendment immediately. Put the responsibility of policing hazardous waste exporters to the country of export, such as Canada, Hong Kong, and Australia. We need to be smart in addressing the problem, and the Basel Ban Amendment is a valuable tool towards protecting a significant portion of the population who are at risk by toxic waste dumping.” San Juan added.



Waste-to-energy: A boon or bane for Philippines?

Danessa Rivera - The Philippine Star 

May 31, 2022 | 12:00am

(Part 1)

The government will push for the development of waste-to-energy (WTE) projects, despite strong opposition from various groups, in hopes of at least putting a dent in the country's perennial garbage problem.

The garbage crisis has been the country's main environmental problem for decades and the pandemic has again put a spotlight on this concern, given the increase in waste generation from tons of plastics and medical wastes.

The recently concluded national and local elections also compounded the waste problem with campaign posters, flyers and other paraphernalia left after the 90-day campaign period.

Clearly, Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 has not met its objective of solving the garbage crisis.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said only 30 percent of barangays nationwide have materials recovery facilities (MRF), while only 30 percent of cities and municipalities are being served by sanitary landfills.

The country's growing population – now pegged at 109.99 million based on latest estimates of the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) – coupled with an expanding economy means more waste generated.

There's also the issue of land being finite. By 2030, the country may no longer have enough space in sanitary landfills for more garbage.

To address the country's perennial waste problem, the government sees the development of WTE facilities as the immediate solution.

WTE versus sanitary landfills

The DENR, through a department administration order (DAO) issued in November 2019, provided guidelines on the establishment and operation of WTE facilities for the treatment of municipal solid waste in the country.

The department sees WTE as a cleaner and more sustainable alternative to the traditional sanitary landfill, which is the waste disposal method allowed under the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.



More recently, the Department of Energy (DOE) issued department circular 2022-02-0002 in February. This prescribes the policies and programs to promote and enhance the development of biomass WTE facilities. The circular took effect on March 18.

Currently, there are 13 WTE plants registered with the DOE, six of which are already operating with a combined installed capacity of 9.69 megawatts (MW). These are located in Metro Manila, Rizal, Cavite and Cebu.

The remaining seven projects, which are all in Luzon and have a 42.48-MW total capacity, are in different stages of development.

There has also been a growing interest in WTE technology among local government units (LGUs).

For one, Ormoc City in Leyte is interested in investing in a WTE project, Mayor Richard Gomez said in 2019. Its only problem is the feedstock—if the city's waste generation is enough to support a WTE project.

Last year, the Quezon City local government revived discussions with the group of Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (MPIC) to develop a 30 to 40-megawatt (MW) WTE facility in Payatas.

In the same year, Metro Clark Waste Management Corp. (MCWM) was also hoping to get the approval to construct a 35-MW WTE project in the Clark Special Economic Zone. Its proposed project is said to use up to 70 percent of waste that would find its way into the landfill as fuel.

More recently, Cebu City Council approved last March a joint venture agreement with New Sky Energy Philippines Inc. to put up an incinerator-based WTE plant. The widely opposed project is now up for Swiss challenge.

Even Davao City started exploring WTE as a waste management option since its existing sanitary landfill neared full capacity.

For this, the city government of Davao Environment Bureau City of Kitakyushu, Japanese non-profit group Kitakyushu City Environmental Preservation Association (KEPA) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in 2017.

And as the country shifts away from coal power development, the DOE is also looking at is the repurposing coal fired power plants to biomass/WTE plants, based on the newly released WTE policy.

DOE-Biomass Energy Management Division chief Ruby De Guzman said the agency launched a study for the possible co-firing of coal with biomass/WTE based on an ASEAN project in 2019 where it investigated the possibility biomass co-firing it with coal in Indonesia.



For this study, the agency is eyeing STEAG State Power Inc. (SPI)'s 210-MW coal-fired thermal power plant in Misamis Oriental.

“We are targeting to complete the study within the year. We need to do data gathering, including technical specifications of feedstock, coal, equipment, and match it with existing biomass or potential biomass resources,” de Guzman said.

But why WTE?

The DOE recognizes that biomass WTE facilities simultaneously achieve the twin economic benefits on local government units' (LGUs) solid waste management and provision of additional source of power.

“We minimize the solid waste and help LGUs, and provide additional power supply,” de Guzman said.

Instead of bringing trash to the landfill, municipal waste could instead be taken to WTE facilities to become fuel.

“Rather than building up more landfills, if municipal waste is brought straight to the WTE facility, it can be directly used as fuel after the segregation,” de Guzman said.

The WTE technology is covered under RA 9153, or the Renewable Energy (RE) Act of 2008.

Under the law, WTE technologies refer to systems which convert to biodegradable materials into useful energy through processes such as anaerobic digestion, fermentation and gasification, among others.

Fuel for WTE include some biomass resources, which cover agricultural products, by-products and residues but also biodegradable organic fractions of industrial and municipal wastes that can be used for bioconversion or other processes. It also includes gases and liquid recovered from decomposition or extraction of non-fossilized and biodegradable organic materials.

And as mandated by law, the DOE shall encourage the adoption and development of WTE as a source of power as long as they comply with RA 8749 or the Clean Air Act of 1999 and the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.

To explain the renewable concept of WTE, this all boils down to the infinite production of municipal solid waste due to the growing consumption of an increasing population, De Guzman said.

Municipal solid waste is defined waste produced from activities within local government units, which include a combination of residential, commercial, institutional and industrial trash and street litters.

“Municipal solid waste is intertwined with existing of modern human society. And as long as people continue to live and enjoy the goods and amenities that the modern civilization provides, municipal solid waste—whether organic and inorganic—will be produced,” the DOE official said.



“Therefore, municipal solid waste fits in the definition of RE resource – energy resources that have no upper limit, renewable on a regular on a basis, renewal rate is relatively rapid to consider availability over an indefinite period of time,” she said.

WTE is not renewable

However, environment groups do not acknowledge WTE as an renewable energy source as this only promotes the use of plastic and worsens climate change.

For one, Greenpeace does not recognize WTE and plastic-to-fuel technologies as renewable energy because these in fact perpetuate the plastic crisis and climate emergency, said Marian Frances Ledesma, its zero-waste campaigner for Southeast Asia–Philippines.

“They discourage waste prevention and justify the continued use of plastic, since cities usually have to guarantee a minimum volume of waste for these facilities. Waste-to-energy incinerators are also carbon intensive, producing more emissions per kWh compared to conventional fossil fuels,” she said.

Moreover, Greenpeace said all municipal waste cannot be classified as renewable biomass as the Renewable Energy Act refers to biomass resources as non-fossilized, biodegradable organic material.

Ledesma said around 99 percent of plastic comes from fossil fuels, so a substantial portion of municipal residual waste is neither a biomass resource nor is it renewable.

On the other hand, burning of organic waste is inefficient as it uses more power to burn organic waste than the energy generated when incinerating it.

“Waste-to-energy, with the exception of anaerobic digestion, has no place in the country’s energy transition as it is neither clean nor safe,” she said.

But Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB) said WTE should be considered more in the context of waste management and circular economy options than as energy solutions.

“WTE is often considered a costly option for waste disposal and energy generation when compared with other fossil fuel-powered generation alternatives,” the ADB Philippines Country Office said in email replies to The STAR.

It said WTE is under the recovery phase of the waste management hierarchy and covers a wider range of processes than incineration such as biogas generation from the organic portion of waste, landfill gas capture, a range of processes including pyrolysis, gasification and thermal depolymerization, among others.

On a case-to-case basis, among the benefits a WTE projects include reductions in open burning of solid waste which generate dioxin, PM2.5 and black carbon emissions that are exceptionally damaging to human and environmental health; reductions in fugitive methane emissions from waste fermentation (even from capped landfills, not all methane can be captured); and displacement of fossil fuels for power and heat generation.



It also has risks which need to be considered, including atmospheric emissions need to be carefully controlled to ensure no risk to health; residual ash needs appropriate containment and disposal; and economic viability depends on the calorific value of the waste, which needs to be sufficiently high.

“A WTE project would only be considered if the risks can be mitigated and the benefits clearly outweigh costs,” the ADB said.

To help address the some concerns on safety, DOE-Renewable Energy Management Bureau (REMB) director Mylene Capongcol said the agency is teaming up with the DENR to ensure that all WTE programs are compliant with existing laws and clean energy technology standards.

“The DOE has already indicated that WTE has two major contributions in the country like solid waste management as well as additional energy supply for the country, particularly for LGUs. There’s a lot of LGUs now engaging or looking at WTE program,” she said.

“We are now partnering with DENR, the Solid Waste Management Bureau and other units in the government to ensure that all WTE projects will be clean and free from any harmful effects to the country and the consumers,” Capongcol said.

31 MAY 2022, TUESDAY



NEWS ALERTS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



05-31-22

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Marawi City to have sanitary landfill

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Jim Sampulna on Monday vowed the completion of an engineered sanitary landfill in Marawi City, Lanao del Sur by end of June.

The construction of a sanitary landfill in barangays Malimuno and Kasanayan in Kapai town would help "protect the health of the Maranao children and guard against groundwater contamination," he said.

"The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is moving forward toward the completion of an engineered sanitary landfill under its solid waste management program as prescribed in Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2001," he noted.

The land used as an open dump in Barangay Papandayan would be rehabilitated and converted into good use, the DENR cited.

Through RA 116961 or the Marawi Siege Victims Compensation Act of 2022, DENR determined the most affected areas through social cartography or mapping as the lead agency in the Land Resource Management Sub-Committee of Task Force Bangon Marawi.

The law serves as "one of the information sources for updating post-conflict needs assessment," Assistant Secretary for Legal Affairs Michelle Angelica Go said.

Under the program Katagombalay, DENR was able to validate 3,914 property claims, allowing owners to undertake reconstruction. Rio N. Araja



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DENR to finish Marawi sanitary landfill next month

ENVIRONMENT Acting Secretary Jim Sampulna said that the Department is moving forward to the completion next month of an engineered sanitary landfill in Marawi City seen to guard and protect the health of the Maranao children against groundwater contamination.

Sampulna has committed to finish by end June the construction of the project landfill in barangays Malimuno and Kasanayan ini Kapatow, Lanao del Sur.

The land used as an open dumpsite in Bgy. Papan-dayan will be rehabilitated and eventually be converted into good use.

Through RA 116961 or the Marawi Siege Victims Compensation Act of 2022, the DENR identified the most affected areas through social cartography or mapping as the lead agency in the Land Resource Management Sub-Committee of Task Force Bangon Marawi.

DENR Assistant Secretary Michelle Angelica Go said that RA 116961 serves as one of the information sources for updating post-conflict needs assessment.

"These records also contributed to the mediation of claims and conflicts facilitated by the Land Dispute Resolution Committee and provided permanent shelter and allowed for the re-construction of land records of Marawi City," said Go, who is also the head of the DENR Sub-Committee on Task Force Bangon Marawi.

The DENR also took part in facilitating the rebuilding of damaged properties while ensuring the authenticity of claims.

Under the program "Katagombalay," the DENR has successfully validated 3,914 property claims so far, allowing owners to undertake reconstruction.

"The goal and strategy to achieve the outputs of the DENR's role in Marawi rehabilitation is environmental peacebuilding, which is accompanied by achieving sustainable development goals," Go said.

Joel dela Torre



TULFO JUSTICE



Ni ERWIN TULFO

HINDI pa huli para sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) para silipin ang quarry operations sa bansa at ipasara kapag ito ay direktang nakakaapekto sa kalikasan at naglalagay peligro sa buhay ng mga tao.

Isinisisi kasi ng ilan ang mga pagbaha at landslide sa maraming parte ng bansa dahil sa mga nagkakalibuhang mga bundok dala na pagka-quarry.

Isang halimbawa dito ay itong quarrying ng mga bundok dyan sa lalawigan ng Rizal dahil para makalbo na ang mga bundok na nagiging dahilan tuloy ng pagbaha at rumaragasang tubig sa Tumana River sa Marikina at Quezon City na galing sa Rizal.

Maging ang isang conservation group ay nananawagan sa pamahalaan na hindi lamang suspensyon ng permit kundi kanselahin na ng tuluyan ang permit na inisyu ng lokal na pamahalaan sa tatlong quarry companies.

Ipinatitigil din nila ang operasyon ng mga quarry sites sa lugar dahil sa buhay ng mga forest rangers

doon at nalalagay ang mga buhay nito sa alanganin.

Hindi lang sa Rizal ang may ganitong problema kundi sa marami pang lugar sa bansa.

Dahil sa mga quarry, nakakalbo na ang mga bundok natin. Entonces, kapag umulan, tuloy-tuloy na ang tubig galing sa bundok sa mga bayan-bayan sa ibaba.

At dahil kalbo na ang mga bundok, landslide naman ang problema kapag tuloy-tuloy ang pag ulan. Wala nakasing makapitan na mga ugat ng kahoy ang lupa ayon sa mga eksperto.

Natitiyak ko na alam naman ng mga local chief executive ang mga masa-

mang epekto ng quarrying pero patuloy itong nagbubulag-bulagan.

Hindi mo tuloy masisi ang mga tao kung makapag-isip na baka may lagay si mayor o si gob sa quarry company para payagan silang mag-operate kahit may dala itong pangalan sa kapaligiran at sa tao.

Kaya panahon na talaga na makialam na ang DENR sa pag isyu ng mga permit to quarry at sa operasyon ng daan-daang quarry sites sa bansa.

Wala na kasing kontrol ang pagbibigay ng permit ng mga lokal na opisyal sa mga kumpanya para mag-quarry basta't kumita lang daw ang munisipyo o ang lalawigan.

DENR dapat silipin quarry operations



TITLE :

Coming together for sustainable tourism



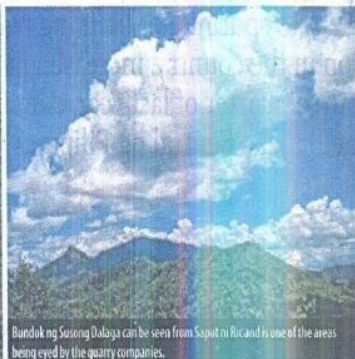
The "Sapot ni Ric," a web-like canopy that was built to connect the limestone rocks.



A crested honey buzzard makes a rare appearance at the Masungi Georeserve.



A view of the Sierra Madre from Sapot ni Ric.



Bundok ng Susong Dalaga can be seen from Sapot ni Ric and is one of the areas being eyed by the quarry companies.

TEXT AND PHOTOS
BY BERNARD TESTA

ACRESTED honey buzzard is seen from a distance, one of the many things Masungi Georeserve, located in Baras, Rizal, has to offer to the those who are looking for an adventure. That adventure includes a four-hour trek inside the limestone park situated at the foot of the Sierra Madre.

According to a recent study conducted by a group of researchers and experts in the Masungi Georeserve, the sighting of the Oriental Honey Buzzard (with the scientific name *Pernis ptilorhynchus*) is rare. "In fact we have only been able to clearly document this raptor species only twice," said Renz Perez, Communications and Project Associate of Masungi Georeserve Foundation (MGF).

Romeo Delasada, 48, is an Aeta-Dumagat who works as a tour guide inside MGF said medicinal plants abound in the area. On a lucky day, visitors can also catch a glimpse of rare breeds of eagles and birds.

One of the best parts of the park is scaling the Sapot ni Ric and Sawa where you can enjoy the 600 meter above sea-level view of the

Laguna lakeshore areas, the Sierra Madre and the nearby Bundok ng Susong Dalaga.

In the middle part of the forest almost halfway through the four-hour trek, you can see a cut Dungon tree, a hardwood tree endemic to the Sierra Madre.

"We could hear the chainsaws of the illegal loggers. This made us cry because before, we could hear the chirping of the birds. But now, all you can see are the remnants of Dungon trees which have tell-tale signs of being cut by these illegal loggers," he said.

World fame for conservation

"For conservation leadership is everything," shared Billie Dumaliang, a conservationist and Trustee of the MGF.

She welcomed the change in the administration. In fact, after working as a conservationist for five years she learned that one of the best tools in conservation is to engage the leaders in government.

She said that in this world of uncertainty, "I think I know how to adapt, anticipate change and be ready for it. That's something environmentalists should embrace to face the challenges of the future."

Speaking at the recent World

Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), at the Marriott Hotel, she said that although nervous, "we were able to speak our mind, to say, that there is a lot of pressure, I felt very happy we were given a chance."

Fighting on the ground

The Masungi Georeserve has been the site of much illegal activities. In 2016, it was reported that some land grabbers, with the help of a private army, tried to encroach on the property. They sought police and government help through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) these requests fell on deaf ears.

In 2017 the late DENR Secretary Gina Lopez and the Masungi Georeserve Foundation Inc. signed a memorandum of agreement covering the 2,798 hectares of land situated inside the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape (UMRBPL).

The UMRBPL, in accordance with the passage of the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System or ENIPAS Act, was declared a protected area in 2018.

Dumaliang related that a number of illegal resorts had sprouted inside the watershed area, adding that this might have a negative im-

act on the ecosystem.

"We are here in this karst limestone ecosystem which is made up rocks, forest and a unique biodiversity. It is very sensitive to our hydrogeological system. Whatever you do in the watershed, especially large quarrying, mining, the construction of resorts, will have an impact on the karst ecosystem. Actually it might sound that it is huge already but the additional 430 hectares to the MGF protected area is actually small. There should at least be 3,000 hectares but in the context of karst ecosystem, trees, wildlife, bats, snails and birds should be allowed to live free of human disturbance," she said.

She claimed that people holding government positions have built structures inside the protected areas without shame. "They were building reservoirs for swimming pools where water is supposedly for the use of the community not for recreation. The existing dams were built to control water after the Ondoy disaster, imagine it is a critical watershed."

Sustainable tourism

Dumaliang reminded the government that their mandate is "to safeguard for the Filipino people,

protect and conserve our natural resources, not to exploit them."

"Sometimes the government forgets this because of the personalities or the interests involved. And then there is this issue about personal values and culture. If you have the right values, you will know that there is a connection between the people and the environment," she said.

Prior to the pandemic, MGF welcomed visitors through their booking of advance tours. Since they wanted to preserve the limestone part, which is part of the karst terrain, the park only entertained a maximum of 10 visitors a day back in 2015. Now they can accommodate up to five groups or 15 to 20 people a day.

"Because it is outdoor, everything is pre-booked, low volume, it wasn't hard for us to adjust, when the government started issuing different restrictions. In short they adapt and reinvent and they sustain the tourism to keep it alive not just for the MGF but for the community," she said.

Come Together

Dumaliang strongly believes that tourism and the environment can co-exist. It not a trade-off between

the two, it is a myth to sacrifice the environment just to earn profit. This is how they stood out during the recent WTTC forum. Low volume tourism can sustain the preservation of the environment.

She adds that while there are departments (in the government) that can talk about industries and economy, there is only one department that can address wildlife, about the communities that depend on wildlife and its environment. This department can can fight for conservation and threats and thinking that nature and conservation can also become an investment not a liability.

There is a multiplier effect on tourism as it will generate jobs for forest rangers from the nearby barangays. Local Aeta-Dumagats of the Sierra Madre can also be tapped as part of the ranger and tour guides.

"We strongly hope that the next DENR secretary will become a voice, someone who will be able to carry out its mandate. I truly believe that conservation tourism and other sustainable enterprises based on nature can help uplift people from poverty," Dumaliang said.



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FAVORED NESTING SITE

HELP SAVE ENDANGERED HAWKSBILL TURTLES

Central to Banwa Private Island's ethos is to support, nurture and protect the island's delicate ecosystem and the rich array of flora and fauna it provides habitat for.

One of the programs through its environmental arm, Aquos Foundation, is to protect the critically endangered Hawksbill turtles.

Banwa Private Island has long been a favored nesting site for the Hawksbill turtles, and conservation projects are continuously implemented to protect preferential areas for the turtles to lay their eggs. Since 2016, over 6,300 Hawksbill turtle eggs have been laid in 69 nests in our shores, of which 61 percent hatchlings emerged.

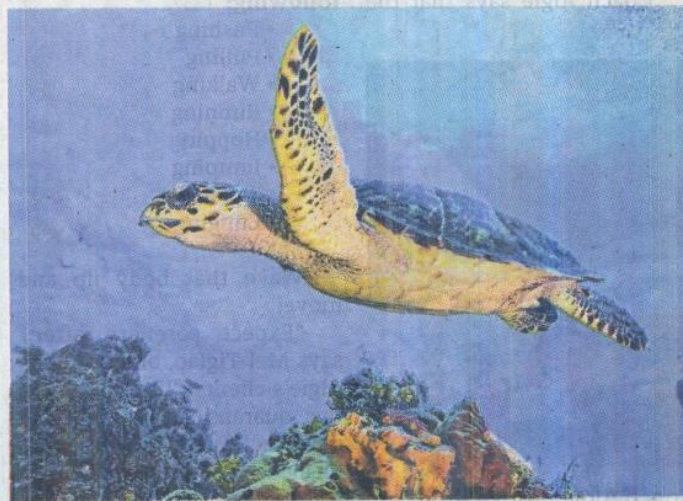
Research initiatives involve nest identification and evaluation, monitoring, DNA sampling and tagging. These have shown promising results as these environment guardians, guided by notable marine biologists, researchers and

scientists, regularly record repeat returns of identifiable sea turtles.

A reef rehabilitation program was also initiated fundamental to the future well-being of the marine turtle population. To date, it has resulted in the deployment of over 180 reef ball structures to provide habitat for corals to colonize and in turn give shelter to sea turtles. An encouraging coral growth with up to 10 centimeters per annum was recorded in branching corals, and a significant uplift in the variety and density of fish species were observed in the research areas.

Banwa Private Island invites guests to participate in its Hawksbill turtle conservation efforts throughout the turtle nesting season (March to October).

Tel. 0917-8882864;
reservations@banwapri-
vateisland.com; or
banwaprivateisland.com



Hawksbill turtles are returning in numbers to Banwa's shores.



Illegal logging in Tanay Rizal?

Natatandaan ko ilang taon na ang nakararaan, may isang lalaki ang nagkuwento sa akin ng kanyang "sideline" sa Tanay, Rizal. Sabi ko sa kanya noon ay basta ligal ay wala namang masama doon. Hindi siya kumibo at yumuko lang habang ginagawa ang bag na ipinasadya ko sa kanya.

Mahusay at beteranong manggagawa ng bag, leatherette man o purong balat, ang lalaki. Iba't ibang disenyo ng bag ang kayaniyang gawin. Tumatanggap siya ng mungkahing disenyo ng customer niya at nagagawa namanniya ito ng maayos.

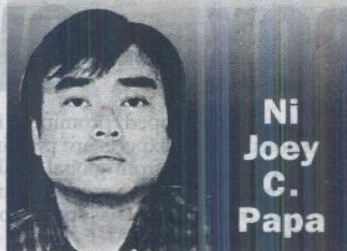
Nang naging magkapalagayang loob kami, ikinuwento na rin niya sa akin na itinigil na niya ang "sideline" na sinasabi niyang ginagawa niya sa Tanay Rizal. Hindi siya nagbigay ng detalye kung saan sa Tanay ang ginagawang pagmimina ng Ore. Siya ay kabakaslang namandaw paramadagdagang ang kita niya sa paggawa ng bag na minsang malakas at kadalasang mahina.

Ngunit natakot na raw siya sa "karma". Bukod sa may ilang nakatira doon ang nagagalit sa kanila dahil hindi naman siya tagaroon at kasama lamang ng mga tagaroon na "seryoso" sa pagsira ng bundok na pinagmumulan ng Ore. Ang nagagalit sa kanya ay mga residente ng komunidad na tutol sa Ore mining.

Pinagsabihan din siya ng kanyang pamilya, magulang at mga kapatid na mapanganib ang ginagawa nila kung ito'y tinututulan ng mga taga komunidad. Tumigil na ang manggagawa ng bag sa paglahok sa Ore mining at tumutok na lang sa paggawa ng bag.

Matagal ko nang naririnig ang pagsisira sa Inang Kalikasan sa Lalawigan ng Rizal. Isang matagal na at "popular"

BANGON KALIKASAN



Ni
Joey
C.
Papa

na pagsira rito ay ang quarrying sa mga kabundukan ng Rodriguez (dating Montalban) Rizal. Matindi ang pagpapapatag na ginagawa sa kabundukan ng Rodriguez bukod pasagabundok na garbage dumpsite dito na tinawag nilang "sanitary" landfill na tinatapanan ng basurang mga lunsod at bayan ng Kamaynilaan. Naidagdag pa rito ang bundok ng San Mateo. Ang mga bundok na ito ay bahagi ng watershed ng lalawigan ng Rizal.

Nakita na natin ang nangyari sa Marikina noong bagyong Ulysses. Lumubog muli ang lunsod ng Marikina sa baha dahil bumulusok ang tubig-ulan mula sa kabundukan ng Rodriguez. Nangyari na ang malawakang pagbahang ito noong panahon ng bagyong Ondoy kung saan namatay ang aking tiya na 12 oras na nakababad sa tubig baha sa loob ng kanilang bahay. Di siya makalabas at malakas ang agos ng tubig baha.

Ngayon ay may lumapit din sa aking isang lalaki na sobrang dismayado sa nasaksihan niya mismo sa isang baranggay sa Tanay. May illegal logging na nagaganap at nakita niya ito mismo. Tinangka niyang pigilan ang pagsasakay sa isang malaking dyip ng

mga trosong hinati-hati sa iba-ibang sukat na order daw sa kanila at sa takbo ng kanilang pag-uusap ay gagamitin lang naman daw ang mga kahoy sa mga bahay lamang. Ang mga trosong tinilad na ay mulapa' umano sa kabundukan ng Nakar Quezon. Dinala sa Tanay ang mga ito sa pamamagitan ng mga kalabaw at sa isang lugar doon ay ginamitan na nila ng chain saw upang magawa ang sukat na order umano ng kanilang kustomer.

Sinabihan sila ng lalaking may pagmamahal sa Inang Kalikasan na bawal ang ginagawa nila dahil illegal logging ito, ngunit nagpaalam naman daw sila umano sa mga pinuno ng barangay na itinatwa naman ito ng punong barangay.

Maraming dyip ang ginagamit para ilabas ito sa Marcos Highway patungo sa kanilang kustomer. Matagal na raw nangyayari ito ayon sa kuwento sa lalaki ng mga residente ng barangay.

Pinalalabas pa ng mga illegal logger na masama at pakialamero ang lalaking nagtangkang pigilan sila sa paglalabas ng mga trosong galing sa kabundukan ng Sierra Madre.

Kailangang kumilos si DENR Acting Secretary Jim Sampulna at Regional Executive Director ng CALABARZON Nilo Tamoria. Marami nang gaganap na hiwaga sa Rizal kasama na ang isyu ng Masungi Protected Area sa Baras Rizal. Matagal nang nangyayari ito.

Huwag nang hintaying mangyari ang karma sa sinuman katulad nang kinatakutan ng manggagawa ng bag na halos mabulag na ang kanyang mga mata.

Marami raw ang paraan ng pagsingil ng Inang Kalikasan sa mga lupalapastangan sa kanyang nilikha



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Building sustainability

As we slowly move forward into the latter part of the year, it's time we get down to brass tacks and figure out the best way forward. Things may have felt like they were on hold because we were waiting for something to pass. First, it was the pandemic, and then it was the elections after that. Significant decisions were often put on hold while we awaited an outcome.

Now that the elections are finished and the pandemic is hopefully ebbing into an endemic, we need to look forward and figure out what we will do next.

INTROSPECTIVE



**TONY F.
KATIGBAK**

I wrote about inflation in my previous column because that will be one of the most significant issues moving forward and we have to find ways to mitigate the impact it will have on all of us.

At this point, the only way forward is to build a more sustain-

able future for all. Sustainability is a buzzword amongst several countries and multinational companies because it has become the defining goal. We can no longer just look towards the next few months, instead we must look farther ahead. The only way we can survive is if we future-proof our plans. Life is more like chess than checkers, and we have to play wisely if we want to win.

By definition, sustainability means creating a world where everyone can take what they need and leave enough for everyone else. It means building systems and programs that account for everyone, not just the elite or the wealthy. It means changing how we look at natural resources and being more mindful of how we consume them. Essentially it means saving for tomorrow while still being able to enjoy today.

While it seems easy enough, achieving sustainability remains a lofty goal because, historically, those with more don't want to share. They just want to accumulate more. Science has proven that, for the most part, there are enough resources available for everyone if they are distributed evenly. However, even distribution of resources and wealth has never been the case. Is it still possible to change that now? We have to try. It's the 11th hour and we have to think ahead.

After all, these past two years have taught us that what impacts one of us will most likely impact everyone. Despite wealth or power, no one was able to avoid the effect of the global health crisis entirely. If things don't change and we don't become better stewards of the planet, things like viruses, unexplained weather phenomena, and more will keep on happening. We have to rethink how we live if we want the outcome to improve.

An important focal point of sustainability is an impending food crisis. We hear about it already in places like Africa or India, and we may think this does not impact us, but it will. We thought that the war between Russia and Ukraine wouldn't affect us because it was so far away, unfortunately, the entire world is feeling the impact now. The same will be true for food and other essential goods unless we figure out how to improve the supply chain, distribute food evenly and efficiently, and improve food waste and our mentality.

At present, there are things that threaten the food supply even in the country. We need to create a better system that helps farmers and makes their jobs easier. We're losing so many second and third-generation farmworkers to office jobs because their families can't make ends meet on the farm. With more and more potential farmers leaving the farms, fewer and fewer are left to farm and plant food. While the impact of this is slow, it will build over time.

More immediate threats include scarcity brought about by the current state of the world. Ukraine, Russia, and now India have stopped the export of wheat, which means products like flour will be more challenging to come by in the coming year. People are looking for local alternatives, but we'll undoubtedly notice soon.

Rice is another issue. Everyone is waiting for rice prices to go down, and while that's understandable, there are also other ways people can help in terms of rice supply. If we watch our consumption and only take what we need, there won't be scarcity for others. Scarcity drives costs up, and hoarding isn't going to help in the long run, it will only make everything more expensive and harder to get.

While we wait to see what the government plans are for subsidized rice prices, we have to make our contribution. Even with the subsidy, the government has to make sure to pay the farmers what they are owed. The worst-case scenario for addressing the rice shortage is to import from neighboring countries. This should be an absolute last resort because it will kill the local farmers.

We also have to be more mindful of how our consumption impacts the environment. It's said often, but it matters every single time. How we live will determine the future of our world and how we leave our children. Now that we're all getting back and going back to the office, traffic is building up again, which means more pollution and a larger carbon footprint. Any improvements we may have made during the pandemic in terms of carbon footprint will be wiped out, and we'll continue to go from bad to worse if we don't stop and take stock now.

At this point, we all have a responsibility to build a sustainable future not just for ourselves, but also for future generations. Whether it's something as simple as eliminating single-use plastics to more complex ones like changing the way we consume food and necessities, we can make a difference if we all commit together. Let's not wait until it's too late.



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Editorial

Green is the way to go

THE green movement is here to stay. Its simple goal is to raise awareness about the importance of environmental conservation. It sheds light on how the environment is directly linked to human health, and the only way in which the environment can be restored is by applying science and conscious, sustainable practices.

The warming of the atmosphere and the oceans from greenhouse gas emissions have led to shifts of weather and temperatures that bring typhoons so powerful that they are almost unimaginable. Think of Super Typhoons "Yolanda" that laid Eastern Visayas to waste, and the recent "Odette" that left Caraga and Central Visayas reeling last December. The Philippines is one of the countries most at risk from the climate crisis. Thus, it is important for the incoming administration to think of concrete ways to mitigate its impact.

One quick way is to again fund Operation Noah, which was begun by the United Nations Development Program in partnership with the Department of Science and Technology and Pagasa during the term of former president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Later, former president Benigno Simeon "Noy" Aquino 3rd continued Operation Noah. Among others, this laudable project provides geo-hazard maps for all the towns and cities, which lists the areas that are prone to mudslides and flooding, and fractured by earthquake fault lines.

Another is to provide subsidies to companies that produce renewable energy, and not just to one (or a few) owned by relatives of senators and other government officials. The start-up costs for renewable energy are high, but there has been a Renewable Energy Law since 2008. What have we done since then?

Electricity in the Philippines is one of the most expensive, if not the most expensive, in Asia. Perhaps, it is time to revisit the idea of joint exploration of the rich West Philippine Sea for oil and gas resources. Drilling for oil and gas and building pipes under the sea are expensive industrial processes, and the cash-strapped Philippine government needs outside help for these. Any agreement between the Philippines and China should be clear and well-vetted; where the exploration would be done under our nation's jurisdiction and achieved through a peaceful, diplomatic process. The profits could be split 60-40 in favor of our government.

Moreover, our forests are dwindling in an exponential fashion. We must give tax breaks to companies that plant groves of trees in their areas or in places they have adopted as reforestation sites. Parks should be expanded since they are the lungs of our cities and towns. One laudable move is the Arroceros Park in Manila, which Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso has turned into a showcase of what parks should be: walkable, with lots of trees and shrubs, well-lighted and beautiful.

Another way is to minimize dependence on coal since it is very polluting, clogging our cities and our lungs. The reopening of the mothballed Bataan Nuclear Power Plant should be studied well since it sits on an earthquake fault. The dire memories of Fukushima in Japan should still be vivid in our minds when an earthquake spilled open radioactive elements into the atmosphere and the sea. The toxicity and radioactivity remain to this day and will do so for centuries to come.

The incoming administration should also make a stand to end plastic pollution for which the Philippines is known as one of the worst in the Asia-Pacific. Vice President-elect Sara Duterte-Carpio is pushing for the phaseout of single-use plastics, and we think she should make the new president see the wisdom in her advocacy.

What about mining? Both President-elect Ferdinand Marcos and Duterte-Carpio have openly advocated for responsible mining done in a sustainable manner. Rightly so, they are aware of its potential to boost the economy. But the communities should be involved in all aspects of mining agreements.

The reasons and the need to protect the environment are long and many. And they are urgent. The clock is ticking, and for some, it sounds like the ticking of a bomb.



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COMMENTARY

The Sendai framework: The impact of the past on the present in the aftermath of Typhoon 'Odette'

**BY RICARDO JALAD, DR.
SELVA RAMACHANDRAN**

SITUATED along both the Pacific typhoon belt and the so-called Ring of Fire, the Philippines has a long history of dealing with the devastating impacts of typhoons, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions and other natural hazards. The country has the unfortunate distinction of being hit by an average of 21 tropical cyclones annually. Being an archipelago with long stretches of coastal areas makes the Philippines highly vulnerable to the impact of climate change as well.

The consequences have been devastating with thousands of lives lost over previous decades and economic losses in the hundreds of billions in terms of direct losses alone. But each disaster has also brought with it lessons on how to better prepare, avoid the loss of life, and reduce economic devastation and damage to infrastructure.

These lessons have served to make a dramatic difference in recent years, saving thousands of

lives. Regretfully, however, the loss of infrastructure and economic devastation persists. Learning from risk assessments, data, and action building back better in recovery from disasters, is crucial to building resilience for the future.

So, in the aftermath of Typhoon "Odette," there must be an even stronger resolve for risk-informed development.

In March 2015, with the benefit of hindsight, the move by the government of the Philippines, along with 187 member states, to help lead the approval of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction during the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction was vital.

The shift from managing disasters to managing disaster risk by bringing a greater focus on preparedness and prevention has paid off massively.

The devastation following the Great East Japan earthquake and its cascading economic effects beyond the country's borders; the impact of Cyclone "Pam" on the Pacific Island state of Vanuatu, the

fury of the 2015 earthquake in Nepal; and the memories of Typhoon "Yolanda" in 2013 were impetus enough to build back better in recovery, and for ensuring that no one is left behind.

At 315 km per hour, the strength of Typhoon Yolanda (international name: Haiyan) exceeded most existing coping mechanisms and capacities, ripping apart infrastructure, devastating communities and public and private institutions.

Stakeholders, including UNDP, knew that rebuilding must focus on enhancing resilience. While typhoons, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions among other natural hazards are inevitable, the high death tolls and huge economic impact should not be.

The actions and policies taken by the Philippines authorities to protect people and infrastructure is evidenced by investments made since Typhoon Yolanda in science-based risk assessment, improved early warning systems, coordinated approach from national agencies, and reinforcing the important

leadership role of local officials.

While the impact of Typhoon Yolanda resulted in unwanted outcomes, this also provided an opportunity to incorporate resiliency measures, including strengthening risk governance, in the rebuilding process. More importantly, it helped restore immediate access to government services both to national and local, crucial to sustaining lives and livelihoods. This all paid off when Typhoon Odette, hit recently.

Working ahead of landfall, authorities pre-emptively evacuated a total of 828,704 individuals and provided assistance to a total of 1,816,603 individuals in evacuation centers, hence saving many lives.

Even now the lessons from the Yolanda experience have served as a reference point for both the Philippine government and UNDP Philippines as we continue to enhance the effectiveness of resilient recovery measures.

As the midterm review of the Sendai framework kicks off, the Philippines National Disaster

Risk Reduction and Management Council, in collaboration with UNDP, is taking stock of progress. With Typhoon Odette, devastating many provinces, the retrospective review can help guide future policies and strategies.

The mid-term review sought to consider the complexities of recovery for communities exposed to systemic and multidimensional risks. With the increasing frequency of extreme weather events and high exposure to geological hazards there is a need to build resilience to historical events, as well as future climate change risks. Given our experience from the pandemic and global warming, we know that building resilience is primordial to achieve sustained national growth and security.

Ricardo Jalad is the administrator of the Office of Civil Defense and undersecretary in the Department of National Defense. Dr. Selva Ramachandran is the resident representative of the United Nations Development Program in the Philippines.



105-31-22

TITLE:

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Tragedy of Ecology Village anomaly



TO THE
POINT

EMIL P.
JURADO

SOMETIME in 1980, when the country was still under Martial Law and when former First Lady Imelda Romualdez Marcos was the Minister of Human Settlements, through the Technology Resource Foundation Center Foundation, a portion of the kilometers-long National Power Corporation powerline, a strip of land running alongside San Lorenzo Village and Dasmariñas Village, some 154 townhouses were built and sold to the public at nominal prices and called Ecology Village.

My wife and I had long wanted to transfer from our house at the Philamlife Homes in Quezon City to Makati City, and we took the opportunity to buy a townhouse beside the Don Bosco Church and beside the Don Bosco School, a few minutes walk to a shopping center and all the restaurants along Pasay Road. Luckily, one of the advisers of Imelda, the late Vincent Recto, was a good family friend and we managed to buy a townhouse with three bedrooms in the second story.

“The incoming president must step in.”

The TRCF issued us a certificate of Ownership equivalent to a title with a lease of P1,500 a year. We were told that the lease of 25 years was renewable after 25 years. All the other buyers were also issued a Certificate of Ownership by the TRCF plus a leasehold on the property where the townhouses were built, ranging from 1,600 square meters to 27,000 square meters, depending on the land where the townhouses were built.

When the strongman Ferdinand E. Marcos, the late father of President-elect Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos, Jr. Was exiled to Honolulu, and the late Cory Aquino was installed as President in February 25, 1986, the Ministry of Human Settlements was abolished. The vengeful administration wanted to erase then Marcos from the face of the earth, then Executive Secretary Joker Arroyo had all the leases of the 154 townhouses in the village called Ecology Village, cancelled, which technically made all the owners of those townhouses informal settlers or squatters on a public land.

I was then chairman of the Ecology Village Homeowners Association and with the help of lawyer Manuel “Lolong” Lazaro, who then was also a unit owner, tried to have that leasehold renewed to no avail. In fact, I recall that we also had discussions with the Privacy Management Council when some big business corporations wanted to have the strip of Napocor powerline, but we could not agree because surveys showed that the 154 owners of the units did not want to sell their units. Thus, we ended all discussions about the nature of the townhouses at Ecology Village, making it almost impossible to sell the units.

With this as background of this tragic anomaly called Ecology Village, I make this appeal to President-elect Bongbong to renew the leasehold of all the units at Ecology Village, to legitimize the 154 units called Ecology Village in fairness, justice and equity, only because we became victims to a vengeful Cory Aquino regime that wanted to erase the name Marcos from the face of the earth. I believe only a President can render fairness, justice and equity to everybody owning units, now in their twilight years. It would do well for the Ecology Village Homeowners Association to make this appeal to the President elect, since the homeowners bought the units during his mother's tenure as Minister of Human Settlements, to render fairness, justice and equity to everybody.

In our discussions with the Privacy Management Council, it was established that while technically, all unit owners of the

154 townhouses called Ecology Village are squatters, government cannot do anything because we have vested rights to the units we bought, and if government were to evict us, government would be facing 154 lawsuits.

The issue of Ecology Village with all its unitowners having been made technically squatters, has been complicated by the takeover of the City Government of Makati of the Napocor powerline. As a consequence, the City Government of Makati has been charging the unitowners real estate taxes for the units they occupy and for all the open spaces. The question now is why should the Ecology Village homeowners be made to pay taxes if they don't own the land? This is issue must be corrected in the soonest possible time.

Personally I believe only the City Government of Makati can resolve this complicated issue, since it is only fair and just that the homeowners who don't own the land should be made to pay real estate taxes.

Again, I repeat this plea to President elect Bongbong to render us fairness, justice and equity by renewing our leasehold right to a government property. Thank you, President-elect Bongbong.

Insiders tell me that the next Senate President will most likely be Senate Majority Leader Migz Zubiri because of his excellent performance as Majority Leader in the 18th Congress. His closest rivals must be Senator Cynthia Villar, a long-time senator. There were earlier reports that Senator Loren Legarda and Senator Sonny Angara may aspire for the Presidency of the Senate, but according to insiders, the Magic 13 prefers Zubiri.

Speaking of the No. 1 Senator of the last elections, movie actor Robin Padilla, has chosen his own committee to lead - the Committee of Constitutional Amendments and Electoral Reform because he would like to push for Federalism. But, I wonder if Padilla knows what Federalism entails and how to get it done. Anyway, let's see how far Padilla can get in his advocacy. Federalism? To replace a republican system of government? Let's see how far he can get.

People have been asking me what I think of the possible appointments of President-elect BBM. Frankly, it would seem that his chosen cabinet members have been getting approval by the private sector, the business community and investors, especially Bongbong's economic team which is the need of the hour, composed of recycled government functionaries from the past administration.

The choice of Benjamin Diokno, Bangko Sentral governor, as secretary of Finance is excellent. Diokno carries with him his experience as former secretary of Budget and Management and as BSP Governor. And definitely he is a man of honesty and integrity. Likewise his economic team, with Felipe Medalla as the new BSP governor, Alfredo Pascual as secretary of Trade and Industry, considering their competence and experience, are also men of honesty and integrity. As the new socio-economic Secretary of NEDA, Arsenio Balisacan carries with him competence and as man of honesty and integrity, he has the support of the business community and investors, a support much-needed, my gully, with the Marcos administration confronted with challenges like jumpstarting the economy, as much needed economic stimulus.

But, Bongbong's economic team will likewise need men of competence and men of honesty and integrity in the Department of Agriculture, Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of Transportation. So far so good as they say since we all know that the success or failure of any administration depends largely on the success and failure of cabinetmen.

In the final analysis, Santa Banana, the people can either sink or swim with the new President, considering the many challenges confronting the new administration. Personally, in my over-70 years as a journalist, my gully, I have never seen so many challenges facing an administration as those facing the administration of President-elect Bongbong Marcos. To be honest, he will need all the help and assurance we can give him, even from a responsible and credible opposition.

31 MAY 2022, TUESDAY



DENR

NEWS ALERTS

COVID-19 NEWS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



COVID-19 cases in Metro Manila slightly up — OCTA Research

By: [Daniza Fernandez](#) - Reporter / [@DFernandezINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 10:39 AM May 30, 2022



MANILA, Philippines — COVID-19 cases in Metro Manila slightly increased , but [the capital region remains at low risk](#), independent analytics group OCTA Research fellow Guido David said Monday.

“An uptick in cases is observed in the NCR, but the rate of increase in new COVID-19 cases is very slow at this time,” Octa Research’s report said, posted on David’s account on social media site Twitter.

Uptick of cases observed in the NCR. Positivity rate increased to 1.4%, while reproduction number increased to 1.08. NCR remained at LOW RISK. The increase in cases is very slow at this

time. [@dzbb](#) [@dzhnews](#) [@DZAR1026](#) [@allangatus](#) [@NewsRmn](#) [@dwiz882](#) [@News5PH](#) [@ali_sotto](#) [@EagleNews](#) [pic.twitter.com/zhAc6GCqgo](#)

— Dr. Guido David (@iamguidodavid) [May 30, 2022](#)

The daily average of new COVID-19 cases in Metro Manila increased from 72 for the period May 16 -22 to 74 from May 23 to 29.

The reproduction number — or the number of individuals being infected by a COVID-19 patient — slightly rose to 1.08 from 1.02 during the same period.

The ideal reproduction number is less than one, according to health experts.

The one-week average daily attack rate — or the number of new infections per 100,000 individuals — climbed from 0.51 to 0.52.

Positivity rate likewise grew to 1.4 percent from 1.2 percent over an average of 11,047 COVID-19 tests per day.

The positivity rate is well [within the World Health Organization’s](#) benchmark of less than five percent.

Hospital care utilization meanwhile inched up from 22 percent to 23 percent.

Based on the Department of Health’s data, the country logged [200 fresh COVID-19 infections on Sunday](#), driving the number of active cases to 2,434.

gsg

Source: https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1604200/fwd-ncr-covid-19-cases-rise-octa-research?utm_source=gallery&utm_medium=direct



'Too early to tell' if COVID case uptick will continue: OCTA Research

ABS-CBN News

Posted at May 30 2022 08:37 PM

MANILA - It is "too early to tell" if the increase in COVID-19 cases in some areas of the Philippines will be sustained, independent research group OCTA said Monday.

The virus' reproduction rate in Metro Manila slightly increased to 1.08 following a rise in its average daily cases to 74 in the past 7 days from 72 during the previous week, according to Guido David.

"So far uptick pa lang nakikita natin, 'di pa clear sa ngayon kung magtutuloy-tuloy, kung dadami pa ang bilang ng kaso o mananatili tayo sa ganitong low risk situation," he said in a televised press briefing.

(So far, we're just seeing an uptick, it's unclear whether it will continue, if cases will continue to rise or we'll maintain a low risk situation.)

"Masyado pa maaga para madetermine ang trajectory. It's still possible mawawala ang uptick...possible also magpapatuloy ang uptick pero bahagya lang siya. Right now it's too early to tell ano ang magiging effect."

(It's too early to determine the trajectory. It's still possible the uptick will decline...possible also the uptick will continue but only very slightly. Right now it's too early to tell what will be the effect.)

Aside from the capital region, areas that have shown an inconsistent rise in cases were Palawan and Agusan del Norte, David said.

"Sa ngayon medyo bumaba na mga kaso sa Palawan at Agusan del Norte. It's still NCR, Calabarzon and Central Luzon na may possibleng may mga upticks," he said.

(Right now cases have declined in Palawan and Agusan del Norte. It's still NCR, Calabarzon and Central Luzon which have possible upticks.)

New COVID-19 subvariants will "definitely" drive an increase in cases, according to David, citing a surge in New York, US caused by the BA.2.12.1 and in South Africa caused by the BA.4.

The public is urged to continue observing minimum health standards and to get vaccinated and boosted to maintain the country's "wall of immunity," David said.

"Mataas pa rin ang wall of immunity natin dahil kung bakit nahihirapan makalusot itong subvarinats," he said.

(Our wall of immunity is still high that's why these subvariants are struggling to get through.)

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/video/news/05/30/22/too-early-to-tell-if-covid-case-uptick-will-continue-octa>



#OneDENR

**Covid-19
Situation and Response**



National COVID-19 Case Bulletin

May 30, 2022

Official DOHgov
@DOHgovph

Healthcare Utilization

(as of May 29, 2022)

17.2%
Non-ICU Bed Utilization
4,073 out of 23,612 non-ICU beds used

16.8%
ICU Bed Utilization
459 out of 2,730 ICU beds used

679
Severe and Critical Admissions
12.3% of total COVID-19 admissions

Vaccination Accomplishment

(as of May 29, 2022)

77.00%
% Coverage of Target Population*

77.29%
% Coverage of Target A2 Population**

69,302,485
Fully Vaccinated Individuals
+259,947 vaccinated on May 23 to May 29

14,100,743
Individuals with Booster/Additional Dose
+239,952 vaccinated on May 23 to May 29

(added on May 23 to May 29)



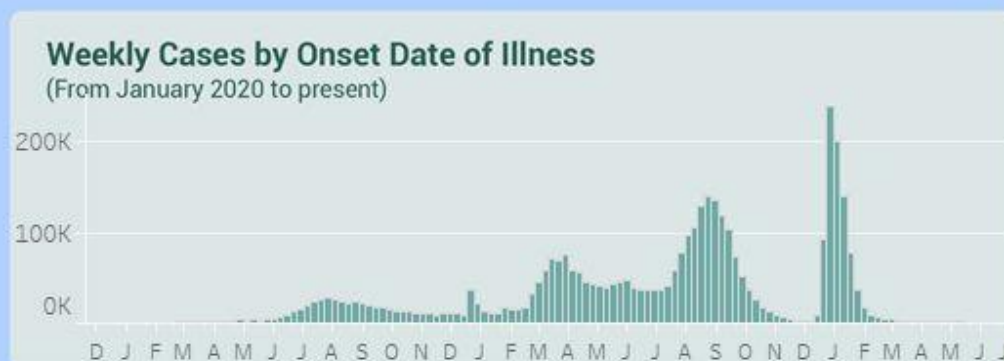
COVID-19 Cases

(as of May 29, 2022)

+1,317
New Cases
Daily Average Cases = 188
(8.8% higher than cases on May 16 to May 22)

+12
Severe and Critical Cases
(0.91% of new cases)

+0
Deaths Verified During The Past Week
(0 deaths occurred on May 16 to May 29)



*Target population refers to 80% of the total population (90,005,357 individuals)
**Target A2 population refers to 85% of the total Senior Citizen population (8,721,357 individuals)
***There were new deaths between May 20 to May 30 that were not reported as deaths in the latest linelist due to issues with data extraction from COVIDKAYA. The DOH is in coordination with DICT to address the issue.

DOH HOSPITAL HOTLINES

For health concerns and emergencies, you may access here the DOH hospital hotlines across the country:

bit.ly/DOHHospitalHotlines

DOH ONE HOSPITAL COMMAND CENTER (OHCC) HOTLINES

• 1555 • 0915-777-7777
• 02-886-505-00 • 0919-977-3333

bit.ly/OHCCHotline

DOH TELEMEDICINE CONTACT DETAILS

bit.ly/DOHTelemedicine

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May tanong ukol sa COVID-19?
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KONTRACOVDPH: kontracovid.ph

31 MAY 2022, TUESDAY



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